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HITLER'S TRADE EXPERT
GUIDES SOVIET FOREIGN TRADE

Dr Karl Claudius, former head of the Economic Section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Reich, now has become the right-hand man of Mikoyan, Foreign Trade Commissar of the USSR. Dr Claudius' duties under Hitler were to arrange trade agreements which gave Germany a privileged position in the foreign trade of the countries which were to be absorbed, or which would permit Germany to make investments in these same countries (cooperative agreements) by which the Reich would control the principal economic enterprises and, through them, the economic life of the countries. Once Germany had entrenched herself and assumed control of the key positions, Claudius drew up proposals which made increasingly heavy demands upon these countries.

Claudius was arrested in Bucharest on 23 August 1944, at the time of King Michael's coup d'etat. Rumania then joined the Allies, and Claudius was interned with the rest of the German diplomatic corps, who were to be exchanged for Rumanian diplomats residing in Germany. Shortly after the arrival of the Red Army in Bucharest, Claudius was seized by the Russians as a "war criminal," and as such Rumania had to surrender him to the Allies. Radio Moscow immediately announced that "one of the principal and most dangerous war criminals" had just been arrested.

This was the last time Moscow spoke officially about this "important criminal," who, incidentally, was never brought to trial.

Claudius collaborated with his protectors and became the technical adviser of the Ministry of Foreign Trade. It was obvious that the USSR knew very little about the economies of her satellites, since her main idea seemed to be to carry off anything that could be moved and to impose measures which brought about a dislocation of the economies of the satellites.

Shortly after this, the USSR did an about-face and offered treaties of collaboration. The Rumanian delegation was surprised to find that the treaty submitted to it in May 1945 contained the skeleton of the plan that Claudius had

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envisioned when he was in Bucharest -- mixed companies in which Rumania would have 50 percent of the shares and the other partner, in this case, the USSR, would have 50 percent in exchange for "technical contributions." These technical contributions, for the most part, were assignment of Soviet personnel to key positions. The mechanics of these mixed companies, actually capitalist "holding companies," conceived by a man with bourgeois training, were so satisfactory from a Soviet point of view that they have been kept intact even today and constitute the sole example of capitalism in countries with collectivized economy.

Claudius next suggested a closer collaboration of the countries in the Soviet orbit, under Soviet management and for Soviet benefit. The German economic plan gave birth at Moscow in January 1949 to the Council of Economic Mutual Assistance, which is made up of countries of the Soviet bloc and is an instrument for strengthening Soviet conquest.

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